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 MERYL FELD (/INDEX.PHP/CONTACT-US/13-MERYL-FELD)     28 MAY 2020

## Jewish Kansas City native sparks global social movement



Jamie Metzl and Rita Blitt at the opening of the Rita Blitt Gallery and Sculpture Garden in Nov. 2017, Mulvane Museum, Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas. (Doug Stremel)

By Meryl Feld / Editor

A last-minute change led to global social movement OneShared.World. On March 17, Kansas City native Jamie Metzl was set to give a talk on how the genetics revolution could be used to fight the pandemic. That morning he decided to talk about something he felt was much more important — why the world was not prepared for this

pandemic.

“The answer to that question is the same as the answer to the question of why we haven’t been able to solve any of the big global problems we face. And that’s that there’s a mismatch between the global nature of our biggest challenges and the predominantly national way we have organized ourselves to address them. It was my feeling that I expressed then that until we solve that problem we’re going to keep jumping out of frying pans and into the fire,” Metzl told The Chronicle. His plan to fix this problem was by creating a global social movement and political force representing humanity’s common aspirations.

The video of his talk went viral. The next evening Metzl worked through the night drafting the Declaration of Interdependence. He sent it to his 8,000-person email list and got “a spectacular response.”

So he called a global Zoom meeting: 125 people from 23 countries attended. “I said this is the problem, here’s how we can work together to fix it. And that was the beginning.” That was April 1. Now it’s a growing community of thousands of people from nearly 100 countries across the world.

The pledge at the center of the global social movement:

Support the establishment of a predictive, preventive and responsive infrastructure to protect us from shared existential threats;

Ensure that the most disempowered among us may enjoy the same essential liberties as the prominent and powerful, that our human commonality is celebrated within the context of our essential diversity and that our equally worthy lives may be lived in dignity;

Work directly and through our communities, organizations, entities and nations to safeguard our common humanity and shared home;

Forge a safe and sustainable global environment for all the species and ecosystems on our planet;

Guarantee the health, safety and well-being of all children and all people and ensure that they have equitable education, health care and security;

Support and share artistic expression in all its forms to help engender connection, respect, meaning and communication across cultures; and

Uphold and promote human fellowship through mutual consideration, respect, empathy and kindness.

“The problem we’re seeking to solve is in my view perhaps the most important challenge for our future as a species. If we can find a way for people around the world to work together we can build a better future not just for ourselves, but for all of the species and for our planet itself,” Metzl said.

One of the original members of the OneShared.World community is internationally-renowned artist Rita Blitt — another Kansas City Jewish community native. Blitt said, “It’s my opportunity to contribute to a better world.”

The two met when Metzl was six years old; their families were friends. “Jamie was particularly interested in art and I think that’s how we struck up such a strong friendship that lasted through all these years,” Blitt said. Forty-five years of friendship.

“Rita is just a great spirit of this world and I think of her as one of my closest friends. It’s been such an honor for me to have Rita as an essential part of my journey of life for the past 45 years, but also as one of the original members of the OneShared.World Community,” MetzI said.

Blitt is on the organization’s art committee. Their goal? Encouraging art to be created all over the world and creating a platform to bring art and its creators together.

“The language of art and culture is the essential language of our common humanity. That’s why artists in many ways are our prophets. They show us the best of ourselves and I wanted to make sure that from the beginning of our process, arts and culture were at the heart of who we are and what we do and how we express ourselves,” MetzI said.

“I wish everyone would know how important their voice is. And how good it will make them feel to partake and also most importantly how OneShared.World gives hope. Today it’s pretty hard to find hope with what we’re faced with. But it is a glimmer of hope in our darkness,” Blitt said.

Kehilath Israel Synagogue sponsored MetzI’s family to come to Kansas City in 1948. They were originally from Austria. His parents are still members of K.I. In high school he was involved in AZA. Many years ago, MetzI’s grandparents had a kosher butcher shop on Troost called Freddy’s Kosher Meat Market.

MetzI said, “The community of Kansas City took them in. And Kansas City, particularly the Jewish community of Kansas City, will always have a special place in my heart. Kansas City has always been such a welcoming place where people tend to look out for each other. Maybe all we need to do is make the world a little more like Kansas City, and the world in many ways could be a better place.”

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You can learn more and get involved by visiting <https://oneshared.world> (<https://oneshared.world>).

Jamie MetzI is an American technology futurist, geopolitical expert and writer.

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